

ISSUE DATE: October 21, 1996

DOCKET NO. P-577, 555, 421/CP-93-1221

ORDER CERTIFYING POLLING RESULTS AND DIRECTING INSTALLATION OF EAS

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Joel Jacobs
Marshall Johnson
Dee Knaak
Mac McCollar
Don Storm

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

In the Matter of a Petition for Extended
Area Service from Zumbrota to Pine Island,
Oronoco and Rochester

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PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On December 2, 1993, customers in the Zumbrota exchange petitioned for extended area service from Zumbrota to the Pine Island, Oronoco, and Rochester exchanges. Zumbrota is served by the Zumbrota Telephone Company (Zumbrota). Pine Island and Oronoco are served by the Pine Island Telephone Company (Pine Island). Rochester is served by US WEST Communications, Inc. (USWC).

Between June 16, 1994, and July 29, 1994, the telephone companies filed proposed cost studies and proposed rates. Between August 22, 1995, and October 10, 1995, the cost filings were modified to reflect changes in access charges.

On March 6, 1996, the Commission issued its ORDER ACCEPTING COST STUDIES AND ADOPTING RATES FOR POLLING in this matter.

Polling of telephone customers in the Zumbrota exchange took place between August 15 and September 30, 1996.

On October 15, 1996, the Commission met to consider this matter.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The final criterion for an EAS petition is whether there is adequate customer support for the proposed EAS route. If a majority of customers vote in favor of the installation of EAS, the Commission is authorized and directed to order the relevant local telephone company to install the service. Minn. Stat. § 237.161, subd. 1 (1994).

The Commission has reviewed the results of the polling of Zumbrota customers in this matter and will certify the following results. With 73.7 percent participation, the results were:

Voting Yes: 861 or 58.4 percent of valid returned ballots.
Voting No: 613 or 41.6 percent of valid returned ballots.

Since more than a majority of the Zumbrota customers responding to the poll voted in favor of installing the proposed EAS route between Zumbrota and the MCA, the Commission will direct Zumbrota Telephone Company (the local telephone company for the Zumbrota exchange) to implement EAS as set forth in more detail in the Ordering Paragraphs of this Order.

ORDER

1. The polling results for the Zumbrota exchange in this matter are hereby certified as set forth above.
2. In accord with the results of that polling, the Commission hereby approves the petition for EAS between the Zumbrota exchange and the Pine Island, Oronoco, and Rochester exchanges.
3. Zumbrota Telephone Company shall coordinate implementation of the approved EAS route and file an implementation schedule within 60 days of this Order. If the schedule changes, the Company shall update that implementation schedule every 90 days. Service shall begin not later than 12 months following the date of this Order.
4. Zumbrota Telephone Company shall make any request for recovery of non-recurring EAS balloting costs at least 120 days before the planned implementation date, i.e. the date that local service in the Zumbrota exchange will be expanded to include EAS service to the Pine Island, Oronoco, and Rochester exchanges. The Minnesota Department of Public Service shall have 30 days to comment on any proposed charges.
5. FIRST NOTICE: Within 10 days of the date of this Order, Zumbrota Telephone Company shall file the first of two proposed customer notices for approval by the Commission or Commission Staff. The notice shall list the results of the polling, the EAS additives, and the proposed implementation dates. After approval, the Company shall serve this notice in the first possible billing cycle in the Zumbrota exchange.
6. SECOND NOTICE: Zumbrota Telephone Company shall notify its Zumbrota customers of the start date of EAS by means of a second bill insert. The Company shall submit the second bill insert to the Commission staff for approval at least **90** days before the implementation date of the service. This notification shall describe the service, instruct customers on dialing, list the additional rates to be paid and the date of implementation and shall be included in the billing cycle that concludes at least one month, but not more than two months, before EAS is implemented.
7. At the time Zumbrota Telephone Company issues this second notice, the Company shall file copies of the final notices with the Department of Public Service and the Commission.

8. At least 60 days before the implementation of EAS, Pine Island Telephone Company and US WEST Communications, Inc. shall file proposed customer notices for approval by Commission staff. This notification should describe the service, instruct customers on dialing, list the additional rates to be paid and the date of implementation. The companies shall include the bill inserts in their billing cycles that conclude at least one month, but not more than two months, before the EAS route approved in this Order is implemented.
9. At least 30 days before the implementation of EAS, Zumbrota Telephone Company, Pine Island Telephone Company and U S WEST Communications, Inc. shall file tariff sheets reflecting the March 6, 1996 Commission Order that established the rates and terms for EAS between Zumbrota, Pine Island, Oronoco and Rochester.
10. Upon the filing of the tariffs required under Ordering Paragraph 9, this docket will be closed.
11. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Burl W. Haar
Executive Secretary

(S E A L)

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